

**The Relation of Diplomacy
to Foreign Missions**

by

John W. Foster.

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BY THE HONORABLE
JOHN W. FOSTER

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THE RELATION OF DIPLOMACY TO FOREIGN MISSIONS

THE greater part of the entire foreign mission effort now being put forth by the Christian churches of the world is directed towards Asia. Across that vast continent from west to east stretches a series of non-Christian countries — the Turkish Empire, Persia, Tibet, China, Corea and Japan. The first two are ruled by tyrants inspired by a bitter hatred to Christianity, and none of them except Japan has any of the restraints of a Constitution or an orderly administration of justice and law.

For these reasons the Christian nations have found it necessary to exact from them the observance of what is termed the practice of extritoriality. This is the exemption under certain conditions of the citizens or subjects of the Christian nations in those countries from their laws and jurisdiction. It is based upon the theory that for certain purposes they carry with them the territorial status they would have if in their own country. This exemption is regulated by treaties or other diplomatic agreements, and is not uniform for all the countries. In general it may be stated, subject to certain exceptions, that an American citizen resident or found in those countries when charged with a crime or an offense against the local law or custom, must be tried by his own diplomatic or consular rep-

representative, and if found guilty the punishment must be meted out by such officer. American citizens also enjoy other privileges in non-Christian countries which I have not time to detail. On this account American diplomatic representatives in Asia have more intimate and responsible duties towards their countrymen than those accredited to Christian powers.

The system of extraterritoriality is one which makes the governments where it is enforced very restive, and they look forward more or less impatiently to the time when it may be abolished. For nearly half a century after Commodore Perry opened the gates of Japan, that country labored under the extraterritorial disability, and it was not until some years after she had adopted a Constitution which guaranteed freedom of religious belief and worship and the other civil rights, and had put in operation a system of jurisprudence and an administration of justice modeled after that of the Christian nations, that she was released from that thralldom.

The resentment of non-Christian countries because of the practice of extraterritoriality is more likely to manifest itself against missionaries than other classes of foreigners, and the diplomatic representatives of some Governments are more on the alert for the maintenance of their rights than others. The French representatives in Asia have shown special zeal for the defense of their missionaries, who are almost exclusively Catholics. Whether their conduct will be affected by the recent abrogation of the Papal Concor-

dat remains to be seen. Germany made the murder of two German Catholic missionaries the occasion of the seizure of an important Chinese port, a large area of territory, and the practical control of an entire province. The Government of the United States has held that American missionaries in foreign lands were entitled to the same protection as American merchants or any other class lawfully in such lands.

But in most of these Asiatic countries special privileges have from time to time been obtained for missionaries. In the bigoted Empire of Turkey, for instance, the zeal of the French Government for the Catholic missionaries has forced the Ottomans to grant them one concession after another, and under the "favored nation" principle the Protestant missions have shared in these favors. In 1858 the United States and other Christian powers secured from China an express stipulation that the missionaries might teach their doctrines without being harassed or persecuted, and Chinese converts should in no case be interfered with or molested on that account. In the same year our Minister to Japan negotiated a treaty which granted freedom of religious worship, and some years later the representatives of the Christian powers intervened to bring about the abolition of the old anti-Christian edict. The last treaty negotiated by the United States with China is so recent (1903), and contains such a remarkable article that I think it worth while to quote it in full, as follows:

“ARTICLE XIV. The principles of the Christian religion, as professed by the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, are recognized as teaching men to do good and to do to others as they would have others do to them. Those who quietly profess and teach these doctrines shall not be harassed or persecuted on account of their faith. Any person, whether citizen of the United States or Chinese convert, who, according to these tenets, peaceably teaches and practices the principles of Christianity, shall in no case be interfered with or molested therefor. No restrictions shall be placed on Chinese joining Christian churches. Converts and non-converts, being Chinese subjects, shall alike conform to the laws of China; and shall pay due respect to those in authority, living together in peace and amity; and the fact of being converts shall not protect them from the consequences of any offense they may have committed before or may commit after their admission into the church, or exempt them from paying legal taxes levied on Chinese subjects generally, except taxes levied and contributions for the support of religious customs and practices contrary to their faith. Missionaries shall not interfere with the exercise by the native authorities of their jurisdiction over Chinese subjects; nor shall the native authorities make any distinction between converts and non-converts, but shall administer the laws without partiality so that both classes can live in peace.

“Missionary societies of the United States shall be

permitted to rent and to lease in perpetuity, as the property for such societies, buildings or lands in all parts of the Empire for missionary purposes, and, after the title deeds have been found in order and duly stamped by the local authorities, to erect such suitable buildings as may be required for carrying on their good work."

The foregoing is sufficient to show that the diplomatic and consular representatives of the United States and the American missionaries must necessarily have important and close relations with each other. This would be so if the practice of extritoriality were the only bond for bringing them together. But the precision with which our treaties have been drawn with the Asiatic governments, the interest which our Government at all times has shown in the work of the missionaries, and the care it has taken in securing the free exercise of their labors and in marking out their duties and those of their converts to the local authorities, constitute a certain oversight by our diplomatic representatives in those countries.

I am happy to say that, with a few unimportant exceptions, the American representatives in the Orient and in the Far East have properly interpreted the spirit of their Government, and in their relations with the powers to which they have been accredited in the mission work they have shown that they were the representatives of a Christian nation. Indeed by the results accomplished, Commodore Perry was

the most distinguished American diplomatist in the East. When he steamed into the Bay of Yeddo with his formidable squadron which filled the subjects of the Shogun with fear and amazement, he gave them their first lesson in Christian institutions. When Sunday came the free intercourse which had been maintained with the shore was entirely suspended and public service, as was the Commodore's invariable custom, was held on the open decks of all his vessels. One of the most useful of all our ministers to Japan was Townsend Harris. During that unique negotiation with the then inexperienced and simple Japanese which resulted in the treaty of 1858, he records in his diary: "I shall be both proud and happy if I can be the humble means of once more opening Japan to the blessed rule of Christianity." You are familiar with the good work done by the late Col. Denby, one of the most able and useful of our diplomats, and of Mr. Conger, recently returned from Peking, laden with honors, both of whom were the staunch friends and supporters of the missionaries. I might enumerate others if time permitted.

I am doubtless addressing some young men who aspire to serve their country in a diplomatic capacity. It is a laudable ambition and I hope you may attain your desire. I am glad to assure you that there opens up in the Far East a wide field of usefulness and honor for the Christian citizen of our Republic, who is so fortunate as to go to those lands as the official rep-

representative of his country. But I address a still larger number of young men who are resolved to enter the great mission field of Asia and to devote their lives to this most noble of all causes. It will be a satisfaction to them to know that many of their predecessors in their humble avocation have been able to render most valuable service to the world and especially to our own Government, in connection with the diplomatic intercourse of the Western nations with the Far East.

In the negotiations which resulted in the first treaty ever made by China with a Christian nation — that of Russia in 1689 — the Catholic missionaries were invaluable participants both as interpreters and advisers. And all through the eighteenth century the Christian fathers were an indispensable part of all diplomatic missions which visited Peking. When the British Government was making arrangements to send the famous Lord Macartney Embassy to Peking in 1792 to open up political intercourse with the Emperor of China, search was made for a competent person to act as interpreter, and the Secretary of the Embassy records that “in all the British dominions not one person could be procured properly qualified,” and that after much inquiry two Christian Chinese students were found in the mission college at Naples, Italy, who were engaged for that service.

The well-known English missionary and interpreter, Dr. Morrison, who first translated the Bible into Chinese, was the chief interpreter of the second British

Embassy in 1816, and he acted as the official interpreter and trusted adviser of the British Government and of the East India Company at Canton for twenty-five years. During the Opium War of 1840 and in the peace negotiations, Dr. Gutschlaff, the German missionary and historian, was in the employ of the British Government, as interpreter and adviser, and was most useful in the negotiations. He was also of service to the United States in a similar capacity at a later date.

When the first American diplomatic envoy that was sent to the Far East by the American Government, Mr. Roberts, was appointed in 1832 to negotiate treaties with Siam and other Oriental countries, he had first to go to Canton, and there procured the services as interpreter of J. R. Morrison, the son of Dr. Morrison. A similar service was rendered for Mr. Balestier, the American representative, the negotiator of the treaty with Borneo in 1850, by Mr. Dean, an American missionary.

In 1844 Hon. Caleb Cushing was sent to China to establish our first diplomatic intercourse with that empire. He was escorted in great state by a squadron of the American Navy. But he was utterly powerless to accomplish the great object our Government had in view till he obtained at Canton the services of Dr. Peter Parker, a medical missionary, and Rev. Dr. Bridgeman, an accomplished Chinese scholar, both of the American Board of Missions. These two gentlemen were made secretaries of the embassy and

through them the negotiations with the Chinese plenipotentiaries were wholly carried on to successful completion. Mr. Cushing returned to America to receive the plaudits of his countrymen for an achievement due in large measure to the humble missionaries. Dr. Parker became so useful to the Government that for several years he acted as *chargé* of the legation and later became the Minister of the United States to China.

One of the best known of Americans in China was Dr. S. Wells Williams. He mastered that most difficult language, and came to be recognized as the first scholar and linguist of all the foreign residents. When our Government determined to force an entrance into Japan, which had been hermetically closed against all foreigners for centuries, Commodore Perry was dispatched with a formidable fleet, and both America and Europe were laid under tribute to furnish men of learning and fitness to make the expedition a success. But before Commodore Perry could venture on the first diplomatic step in his work, he had to repair with his fleet to Canton to take on board Dr. Williams as his interpreter and adviser; and the narrative which the Commodore has left of his expedition shows that in securing intercourse with the authorities and in the details of treaty negotiations, Dr. Williams was his main support, and to him, more than to any other person, was the Commodore indebted for the complete success of his expedition, which has brought so

much fame to American diplomacy and which has given to the United States such prominence in the affairs of the Far East.

When the allied British and French fleets went to Tientsin in 1858 to exact treaties from China, the American Minister took with him Dr. Williams as his counselor and interpreter, and he played a very important part in those negotiations. The Minister reported to his Government: "I could not but for this aid have advanced a step in discharge of my duties." Years afterwards, when Dr. Williams was leaving China to return to America to spend the evening of his life, the Secretary of State, Mr. Fish, wrote him: "Above all, the Christian world will not forget that to you more than to any other man is due the insertion in our treaty with China of the liberal provision for the toleration of the Christian religion." For many years after that event the Doctor continued as the trusted adviser of our Government in all Chinese questions. He left as a monument to his industry and learning the Chinese Dictionary, and he gave to the world in his "Middle Kingdom" the most complete work on China, which is to this day the standard authority on that country.

Another person took a prominent part as the associate of Dr. Williams in the Tientsin expedition and negotiations of 1858 — Dr. W. A. P. Martin, who went to that country as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of the United States. He became pro-

ficient in the Chinese language and literature, and was called into the service of the Imperial Government. For thirty years he held the post of the head of the Chinese educational system in the foreign course of study, and has acted as an adviser to its Foreign Office in international affairs. He has translated into Chinese our own standard author on international law, Wheaton, and other Western publicists. He has been of inestimable service to the Imperial Government, and has been characterized by Minister Denby as "the foremost American in China."

Such are some of the services which Christian missionaries have rendered to the Western nations and to China in their political and diplomatic relations. It is not too much to say that up to the middle of the last century the governments of Europe and America were almost entirely dependent upon the missionaries for the direct conduct of their intercourse with Chinese officials.

My object in this brief review has been to show the relation which exists in the non-Christian countries between the American diplomatic and consular representatives and the missionaries, how necessary and intimate must be this relation, and what it has accomplished in the past. Let us hope that these two classes of representatives of America in heathen lands may continue to work in harmony for the honor of their own country and for the enlightenment and blessing of the hundreds of millions of the people of Asia.



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